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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 18th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. TSHERING (Bhutan)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 105: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued) (A/C.3/50/L.10-L.12)

Draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.10

1. Ms. WOERGETTER (Austria) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.10, entitled "Follow-up to the International Year of the Family", and said that Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Cameroon, Nigeria, Panama, Poland and Romania had joined the sponsors and that the Dominican Republic was no longer a sponsor. Following the extensive consultations with the sponsors and the principal groups, two amendments to the draft resolution had been introduced. In the fifth line of paragraph 2, the phrase "by 1996" was replaced by the words "before the end of 1995", with a view to adjusting the text to the consensus reached at the World Conference on Women, held in Beijing. In the first line of paragraph 5 (b), the word "comprehensive" had been inserted before the word "document".

2. The draft resolution was based on the resolution on the same item adopted at the thirty-fourth session of the Commission for Social Development, and in the drafting account had been taken also of the report of the Secretary-General on the observance of the International Year of the Family, contained in document A/50/370. The purpose of the draft resolution was to continue to keep family-related items in the work programme of the United Nations and to coordinate the implementation of the policies agreed on at major United Nations conferences and conventions. Consequently, the draft resolution requested that the integrated submission of reports should be promoted so as to make better use of human and material resources.

3. At the same time, the Secretary-General was requested to continue the operation of the voluntary fund for the International Year of the Family, to be renamed the United Nations Trust Fund on Family Activities. She hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

Draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.11

4. Ms. ENKHTSETSEG (Mongolia) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.11, entitled "Progress made and problems encountered in the struggle against illiteracy: a mid-decade review - Cooperation to achieve education for all", and said that the sponsors had been joined by Australia, Belgium, Burkina Faso, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Denmark, Germany, Guinea, Madagascar, Mozambique, Portugal and Turkey.

5. While the preparation for and observance of International Literacy Year had created greater awareness of the problems of illiteracy throughout the world and of the need to mobilize national and international efforts to promote education and literacy, its fundamental objective had not yet been realized. The draft resolution, inter alia, underlined the importance of maintaining the momentum generated by International Literacy Year and the spirit of partnership forged

and increasing efforts at the national and international levels to achieve the goal of education for all, for, in spite of the significant advances made and the commendable work of the specialized agencies and other members of the United Nations system, grave problems still persisted. Accordingly, financial and material assistance was also needed for efforts to increase literacy and achieve education for all.

6. Taking into account the provisions of the report of the Secretary-General (A/50/181), in paragraph 8 of the draft resolution, the Secretary-General was requested, in cooperation with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, through the Economic and Social Council, a progress report on the implementation process of the education for all objectives, including the recommendations of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All. In that context, the sponsors wished to add at the end of paragraph 8 the following words: "taking into account the possible measures, if any, to improve the reporting procedures". She hoped that the draft resolution could be adopted by consensus.

7. Mr. FERNANDEZ (Spain), Ms. WAHBI (Sudan), Mr. BOISSON (Monaco), Miss BOUM (Cameroon), Mr. OTUYELU (Nigeria), Mr. RAI (Papua New Guinea), Ms. NEIJON (Marshall Islands) and Mr. OULD MOHAMED LEMINE (Mauritania) announced that they wished to join the sponsors of the draft resolution.

Draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.12

8. Ms. LIMJUCO (Philippines) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.12, entitled "Towards full integration of persons with disabilities in society: implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and of the Long-term Strategy to Implement the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons to the Year 2000 and Beyond" and said that Armenia, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Guinea, Monaco, Nigeria, Panama and Turkey had joined the sponsors.

9. Various General Assembly resolutions had mentioned the need to elaborate a global disability indicator, and there had been a clear lack of mechanisms to maintain a flow of information on the situation of persons having disabilities. In paragraph 8 of section I of General Assembly resolution 49/153, the Secretary-General and the United Nations agencies concerned had been encouraged to finalize, in consultation with Member States, the elaboration of a global disability indicator, and the Special Rapporteur had been urged to make use of it, where appropriate in his future work. Although that work had advanced, albeit slowly, the current draft resolution requested "the Secretary-General and the United Nations Development Programme, in close cooperation with the Statistical Division of the Secretariat, to finalize the development of global indicators for the fulfilment of equal opportunities for persons with disabilities and the respect of their human rights". Although the consultations relating to the draft resolution had not yet been concluded, she hoped that it could be adopted by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 103: ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued) (A/C.3/50/L.5/Rev.1, L.6 and L.9)

Draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.5/Rev.1

10. Mr. SAHRAOUI (Algeria) said that draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.5/Rev.1, entitled "Measures to combat contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance", had been the subject of intensive negotiations and that some amendments had been agreed on. Paragraph 1 should end with the word "intolerance"; consequently, the rest of that paragraph should be deleted. In paragraph 5, the words "calls upon" should be replaced by the word "encourages". In the third line of the same paragraph, after the words "at all levels" the words "as appropriate" should be added. Paragraph 7 should be replaced in its entirety by the following: "Recognizes also that Governments should implement and enforce legislation to prevent acts of racism and racial discrimination". Paragraph 9 should end with the word "mandate". Consequently, the rest of that paragraph should be deleted.

11. The CHAIRMAN said that the draft resolution had no implications for the programme budget.

12. Mrs. BAIARDI (Paraguay) pointed out that the Spanish and English versions of the first preambular paragraph should refer to resolution 49/147 rather than 48/147.

13. Draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.5/Rev.1, as orally revised, was adopted.

14. Ms. TAMLYN (United States of America) said that the United States had always been firmly committed to the battle against contemporary forms of racism and racial discrimination and to the preservation of human rights, including the right to free speech set out in article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. While it welcomed the efforts of the Special Rapporteur to identify instances of racial discrimination in his report (E/CN.4/1995/78 and Add.1), it could not fully support the conclusions and recommendations in the report. History had shown that censorship of the media could lead to polarization of the population, engendering distrust. Therefore, the United States did not endorse the Special Rapporteur's call for monitoring the media.

Draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.6

15. The CHAIRMAN said that draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.6 on the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination had no programme budget implications. He announced that China had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

16. Mr. SAHRAOUI (Algeria) introduced a number of revisions orally. In paragraph 11, the word "Further" should be added at the beginning, and the phrase ", by the year 1998," should be deleted. A new paragraph 11 should be inserted and all subsequent paragraphs renumbered. The new paragraph 11 would read:

> "Requests States to review the relevant decisions of the Economic and Social Council on the comprehensive follow-up to previous world conferences

and the need to make the best use of all existing mechanisms to combat racism;".

17. Draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.6, as orally revised, was adopted.

18. Ms. TAMLYN (United States of America), speaking in explanation of position, said that the existing mechanisms for fighting racism could be significant in encouraging States to strive to eradicate acts of racism. Rather than discussing the possibility of holding a conference on racism, the United Nations should use those instruments more effectively. It should focus attention on implementing the recommendations of the Beijing Fourth Conference on Women, the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development, before planning any other major conferences. That would allow the Organization to apply the lessons learned and avoid repetition of earlier discussions.

19. Therefore the United States did not at the moment support initiating preparations for a third world conference on racism. Her delegation emphasized its support for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, pledged itself anew to domestic and international efforts to eradicate racism and reiterated its call for responsible use of United Nations resources.

20. Mr. ARDA (Turkey) said that he welcomed the adoption of the draft resolution because of its crucial importance in the struggle against contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, and he drew particular attention to the appeal for closer cooperation with the Special Rapporteur. The convening of another world conference would greatly advance the struggle against all forms of racism and racial discrimination.

Draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.9

21. Ms. TOMIĆ (Slovenia), said that she wished to make a revision on behalf of the sponsors of the draft resolution entitled "Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination". In the fourth preambular paragraph, the phrase "all forms of" should be inserted after the phrase "elimination of". She expressed the hope that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

22. The CHAIRMAN said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications and announced that Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Egypt, Georgia, Niger, Panama, Papua New Guinea, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey had joined the sponsors.

23. Draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.9, as orally revised, was adopted.

24. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee recommended that the General Assembly should take note of the reports of the Secretary-General on the status of the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (A/50/468) and on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination (A/50/493), and of the note of the Secretary-General on the elimination of racism and racial

discrimination (A/50/476). The Committee had concluded its consideration of agenda item 103.

AGENDA ITEM 104: RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION (continued) (A/C.3/50/L.4/Rev.1, L.7 and L.8)

Draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.4/Rev.1

25. The CHAIRMAN said that draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.4/Rev.1 had no programme budget implications.

26. Ms. NEWELL (Secretary of the Committee) said that certain amendments should be made to the draft resolution. In the fourth preambular paragraph, the words "international criminal" should be inserted before the word "mercenary". In paragraph 4, the word "early" should be replaced by the word "necessary".

27. Angola, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana and Rwanda had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

28. Mr. OTUYELU (Nigeria) orally introduced a number of revisions. The fourth preambular paragraph should be revised to read:

> "Alarmed and concerned about the danger that the activities of mercenaries constitute to the peace and security of developing countries, particularly in Africa and in small States, where democratically elected Governments have been overthrown by mercenaries or through international criminal mercenary activities,".

29. The CHAIRMAN said that the United Kingdom had asked for a recorded vote on draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.4/Rev.1.

30. A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining: Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Georgia, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Kazakstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Marshall Islands, Monaco, New Zealand, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine.

31. Draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.4/Rev.1, as orally revised, was adopted by 98 votes to 18, with 32 abstentions.

32. Mr. RODRÍGUEZ (Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union in explanation of vote after the voting, said that the European Union unequivocally condemned the recruitment, use or financing of mercenaries and understood the concerns, in particular those of the African countries, which had led to the submission of the draft resolution. However, it had not voted in favour, because it considered that the report by the Special Rapporteur contained several considerations that were extraneous to his mandate and that mercenary activities could be best dealt with as a criminal problem. In that context, the request to the Centre for Human Rights to address those activities as a matter of priority did not appear justified, especially in view of the paucity of resources available for other more pressing human rights activities.

33. Mr. SOAL (South Africa) said his delegation had taken note of the comments of the Special Rapporteur on mercenaries in his report to the Third Committee concerning the changes in South Africa which had made possible the transformation of the apartheid system into a multiracial and multiparty constitutional system. That process had taken a step further with the recent holding of local government elections in most of the country. For technical reasons, voting had not taken place in certain areas, although voters there would have the opportunity to vote early in 1996. At that time, democracy in South Africa would be truly consolidated.

34. The South African Government was strongly opposed to its citizens being involved in the internal conflicts of other countries and took a firm stand against the use of mercenaries anywhere, especially on the African continent. South African legislation prohibited all mercenary activities and provided for substantial fines and prison sentences for transgressors.

35. Mr. LEUCA (Republic of Moldova) said that, despite having reservations about certain paragraphs, his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution because of the particular situation in the eastern region of his country, which had been made worse since 1992 by the participation of mercenaries in military activities against the Republic of Moldova. There were still mercenaries in the illegal armed forces of the self-proclaimed Trans-Dniester Republic.

36. Mr. CONTINI (France) explained that the original position of his delegation had been to vote against the draft resolution, but when the time had come to vote it had abstained, for two reasons; first, because of the considerable improvements made to the text and, second, because of the recent news of the coup d'état in the Comoros. It had been carried out and led by mercenaries, mostly French, which had led France to intervene, arresting them and removing them to French territory, where they were currently in prison awaiting trial.

37. Ms. TAMLYN (United States of America) said that her Government remained opposed to the recruitment and use of mercenaries. However, she believed that the issue had been sufficiently reviewed in the appropriate forum, which was the Ad Hoc Committee established by General Assembly resolution 35/48 of 4 December 1980. The question of mercenaries was not comparable with the grave violations of human rights which would be discussed during the current session. In order to focus most effectively the efforts of the United Nations and maximize the effectiveness of its human rights institutions, it was vitally important to redirect attention to the effective implementation of fundamental human rights.

38. Ms. HALL (United Kingdom) said that her delegation shared the views expressed by the representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union, and simply wanted to reiterate the United Kingdom's strong belief that the draft resolution would not remedy the situation, despite the general desire for such a remedy. The United Kingdom had been unable to join in the consensus on the related resolution of the Commission on Human Rights in March 1995, because it believed that the usefulness of the Special Rapporteur's mandate had ended and it was necessary to redeploy the resources at his disposal to other human rights activities. Finally, there were problems with the wording of several passages in the resolution, such as the imprecise reference to various "principles" of the Charter in the third preambular paragraph. Perhaps the intention had been to reflect the provisions of Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter, although the principle enshrined there concerned the obligation of Member States to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State.

39. Ms. KOVALSKA (Ukraine) explained that the original position of her delegation had been to vote in favour of the draft resolution, but when the time had come to vote it had abstained because in its judgement the text limited the scope of its measures to a regional rather than a world context.

40. Mr. OTUYELU (Nigeria) pointed out that in the view of Nigeria, which was one of the sponsors of the draft resolution, the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination was a necessary prerequisite for the enjoyment of human rights.

41. Ms. HORIUCHI (Japan) said that her delegation had voted against the draft resolution despite the fact that Japan not only refused to participate in or condone mercenary activities but, on the contrary, deplored the practice, which was prevalent in many parts of the world. Nevertheless, it had some reservations about the appropriateness of tackling the question in the Third Committee in the context of considering the right to self-determination.

Draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.7

42. The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of the Committee to draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.7, entitled "Universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination", and said it would have no financial implications for the programme budget.

43. Draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.7 was adopted without a vote.

44. Ms. MURUGESAN (India), speaking in explanation of vote after the voting, said India had not opposed the adoption without a vote of the draft resolution, but that was without prejudice to its position on article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the relevant resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights. The Republic of India repeated its view that the term "the right to self-determination" in the aforementioned articles applied only to peoples under foreign domination and not to independent sovereign States or to a section of a people or nation. That was the essence of national integrity. India also wished to underline the concern expressed in the Vienna Declaration that, in accordance with the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the right to self-determination should not be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign independent States.

Draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.8

45. The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of the Committee to draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.8 entitled "The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination", and said it would have no financial implications for the programme budget.

46. Ms. NEWELL (Secretary of the Committee) read out two revisions to the draft resolution. In the third preambular paragraph, "the Government of the State of Israel" should be replaced by "the Government of Israel", and in operative paragraph 2, the word "may" should be replaced by "could".

47. Mr. AL-MUTAIRI (Kuwait) and Mr. SALEH (Bahrain) announced that they wished to become sponsors of the draft resolution.

48. The CHAIRMAN announced that Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho and Mozambique had also become sponsors of the draft resolution.

49. Mr. YAACOBI (Israel), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that, despite the title of the draft resolution under consideration, what was at issue was not self-determination but the commitment to the agreements signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the essential principles underlying the peace process. Israel had long advocated the principle of direct negotiations without preconditions as the framework to advance peace in the Middle East. That principle had formed the basis of the peace process begun in Madrid and had made it possible to initiate the ongoing

bilateral negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbours, sign the Declaration of Principles on 13 September 1993 and subsequent agreements between Israel and the PLO, and sign the agreements culminating in the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan.

50. In his letter of 9 September 1993 to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat had said that the PLO was committed to the Middle East peace process and to a peaceful resolution of the conflict between the two sides, asserting moreover that all outstanding questions relating to permanent status would be resolved through negotiations. Although that commitment had been upheld in subsequent agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, the draft resolution which the Committee had before it was intended to predetermine the outcome of the talks on permanent status and therefore contradicted the obligations undertaken by the PLO in the Declaration of Principles. For that reason, Israel would vote against the draft resolution and urged all Member States which supported the peace process to do the same. Nevertheless, Israel remained committed to the peace process and would spare no effort to bring it to a successful conclusion. Israel called on all parties in the negotiations to do the same.

51. Mr. BIØRN LIAN (Norway), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that, notwithstanding his Government's support of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, it should not be forgotten that the question of the permanent status of the Palestinian territories was the subject of negotiations between the PLO and Israel according to the Declaration of Principles of 13 September 1993. The agreement in the Declaration was based on mutual recognition and cooperation between the two parties. Norway considered that the Committee should be careful not to intervene in a decision which was for the two parties themselves to make. Norway would therefore abstain in the vote.

52. A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal,

Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Israel, United States of America.

Abstaining: Argentina, Cameroon, Fiji, Gabon, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Marshall Islands, Norway, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Rwanda, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Uruguay.

53. Draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.8, as orally revised, was adopted by 134 votes to 2, with 14 abstentions.

54. Mr. PARSHIKOV (Russian Federation), speaking in explanation of vote after the voting, said that the realization of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people was the subject of negotiations between the parties concerned and that the Russian Federation was one of the sponsors of that negotiating process. That process had already achieved some positive results. His delegation did not believe it was helpful for the General Assembly to adopt resolutions which amounted to taking the side of one of the parties in that process, and had therefore abstained in the vote.

55. Mr. ARDA (Turkey) stressed the importance that Turkey attached to the right of all States in the region, including Israel, to live in peace within secure internationally recognized borders in accordance with the relevant resolutions adopted by the Security Council. His country's vote in favour of the draft resolution reflected its commitment to promote all measures which might lead to complete reconciliation in the region.

56. Mr. REZVANI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, in the judgement of his delegation, the agreements concluded recently would not lead to the full restoration of the Palestinian people's inalienable rights. He said that, despite having voted in favour of the draft resolution and while bearing in mind the position it had taken on the matter, the Islamic Republic of Iran wished to put on record its reservations about the final preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 2.

57. Mr. GARCÍA MORITÁN (Argentina) said that Argentina had abstained in the vote because it did not wish to be party to a decision which might directly or indirectly upset or harm the process of peace negotiations between the parties or influence it in any way.

58. Mr. KEENE (United States of America) said that the United States was committed to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Significant progress had been made towards reaching that goal, such as the historic Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip which had been signed a few weeks earlier in Washington, D.C. The signing of the Interim Agreement and its implementation were clear signs that the process

embarked upon by Palestinians and Israelis was creating a new relationship between the two parties which was directed towards making peace. The international community should do all in its power to support that process, including supporting the Palestinians as they sought to build new institutions and a better life for themselves.

59. The parties to those negotiations had agreed that permanent status issues should be covered at a later stage of the political process and they had recognized that some issues were so complex and sensitive that an interim period was needed before dealing with them. The United States had voted against the draft resolution because it did not think the United Nations should take a position on an issue supported by only one of the parties to the negotiations. The international community should promote and support the agreements reached by the parties and not interfere in the process by taking positions which could be seen as an attempt to prejudge those agreements.

60. Mrs. HOPIUCHI (Japan) said that, despite voting in favour, Japan believed the adoption of the draft resolution did not advance the peace process in the Middle East, as operative paragraph 3 urged the international community to support only one of the parties to that process. Japan believed that it fell to the parties concerned to resolve the question of permanent status by means of negotiations.

61. Mr. HAMIDA (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that his delegation's vote in favour reflected his country's total support for the Palestinian people and its right to self-determination. However, his delegation wished to put on record that its vote in no way implied recognition of the so-called State of Israel. It also wished to express its reservations about the reference in the resolution to the peace process, as a just and lasting peace leading to the solution of the problems of the Palestinian people could not be achieved until all Palestinians had returned to their native soil, all their property had been returned to them, and a democratic State had been created throughout the length and breadth of the Palestinian territories, issues on which there was still disagreement between Arabs and Jews.

62. Mrs. BARGHOUTI (Observer for Palestine) said that the adoption of the resolution by such an overwhelming majority of votes reflected the concern of the international community for the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. She urged those countries which had abstained to give further consideration to the issue when the General Assembly completed the voting on the draft resolution. In her opinion, the negative vote of the United States and Israel could be interpreted only as a denial of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. It was time for the Palestinian people to enjoy all its rights on an equal footing with other peoples.

63. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee recommended that the General Assembly should take note of the Secretary-General's report on the right of peoples to self-determination (A/50/485) and that the Third Committee had completed its consideration of agenda item 104.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.